

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

May 9, 2012

Lisa Jackson, Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson,

I write you today in support of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) plan to hold public meetings to outline findings of the Bristol Bay watershed assessment. Thousands of Washingtonians rely on Bristol Bay salmon for their livelihoods. Due to Washington State's clear connection with the Bristol Bay watershed, I ask that you hold public meetings in Washington State to review the watershed assessment.

Nearly a thousand Washingtonians hold commercial fishing permits in Bristol Bay, supporting thousands of jobs in my state. In 2008, Bristol Bay commercial fisheries – including a catch of around 42 million sockeye – yielded over \$113 million dollars, while recreational salmon fisheries yielded an additional \$75 million for Washington state businesses alone. In total, the Bristol Bay commercial and recreational salmon fisheries are worth at least half a billion dollars annually.

Commercial fishermen, charter outfits, gear suppliers, processors, restaurants, shipyards, and tourism ventures have called on the EPA to ensure that high quality scientific analysis is completed in order to understand how large scale mining operations could impact the fisheries. Thousands of my constituents have also contacted me asking for more information on the EPA's process, results, and plan moving forward. A science driven, independent process is critical to evaluating the potential risks a new large-scale hard rock mine, such as the proposed Pebble Mine, could have on our economy and the environment. This is why I wrote to you in support of the EPA's watershed assessment last September.

Salmon season begins in June, which means many Washington state based fishermen will be out of contact during critical junctures in this process. To ensure all Pacific Northwest have the opportunity to be part of this public comment process and provide valuable feedback, I hope you will be able to hold this public meeting in Washington State no later than June 1, 2012.

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I greatly appreciate your dedication to a transparent public process that relies on high quality scientific data and balances diverse stakeholder interests. Due to the importance of this issue to Washington State and the Pacific Northwest, I would greatly appreciate being informed about all developments on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Maria Cantwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maria" and last name "Cantwell" clearly distinguishable.

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

cc: Dennis McLerran, Regional Administrator for Region 10, Environmental Protection Agency